

# MIDDLETOWN LEADS

## WHAT IS MIDDLETOWN LEADS?

*Middletown Leads* is a weekly newsletter intended to connect the Middletown community by providing information about the civic undertakings of the Town.

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLANS – THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE & TIME

The State of RI requires that each community review and revise its Comprehensive Community Plan every 10 years. It recognizes that change is inevitable with the passage of time. Thus it requires a progress review every 5 years and allows as many as 4 amendments per year.

## MIDDLETOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

The current Community Comprehensive Plan was approved by The Middletown Planning Board on September 10, 2014; it was adopted by the Middletown Town Council On March 2, 2015.

## MIDDLETOWN'S PLAN – THE OVERALL VISION

Middletown will preserve its *quality of life* for all generations as a *safe and friendly* community with a *distinctive heritage*, *extraordinary cultural and natural resources*, a *strong local economy* and *fiscally sound government*.

In this and future newsletters, we will explore the various areas addressed by the Comprehensive Plan to see how it addresses the values it has defined as equally important to the community's character:

1. Cultural & Historic Resources
2. Natural & Ecological Resources
3. Recreation, Conservation, & Open Space
4. Economic Development
5. Transportation
6. Housing
7. Facilities & Services
8. Land Use

## AREA # 2 – NATURAL & ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The chief goals of this area of the Comprehensive Plan include the following:

1. To ensure that new development takes place in an ecologically sound manner
2. To protect and preserve the town's natural drinking water supply
3. To protect and restore valuable coastal resources
4. To promote the preservation and restoration of Middletown's ecological systems
5. To protect the natural and rural character of Middletown

6. To preserve existing forested areas and increase the town's tree resources
7. To reduce the town's vulnerability to climate change impacts
8. To protect and maintain the air quality of Middletown and Aquidneck Island
9. To promote energy conservation and the development of renewable energy resources

## SOME SPECIFIC AREAS OF NATURAL & ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are many conditions that warrant consideration in this area of the plan. *Geology* and *Landforms* include rock formations but also rich agricultural soil. *Watersheds* such as *Bailey Brook*, *Paradise Brook*, *Maidford River*, and *Nelson Pond* feed into 3 large ponds, which provide the local water supply.

*Saltmarshes*, such as at *Sachuest* and *Gardiner Pond*, serve to reduce pollution of both water and air, but they are fragile and need protection.

Topical areas such as forests, open fields, greenways, and the beaches as well as the resident wildlife also need protection. Marshes, bogs, and swamps provide protective buffer zones around reservoirs.

## ISSUES THAT MIGHT PRESENT CHALLENGES

1. Sea level rise has increased the potential for flooding and drinking water contamination.
2. Natural plant species are threatened by invasive species with bacteria that endangers the water supply.
3. Management of stormwater is vital to the reduction of pollution and the protection of public health.
4. While a majority of Middletown has sewer service, some areas of town still have septic systems that contain pollutants such as nutrients, suspended solids, oil, grease, and pathogens.
5. Renewable energy, alternate forms of transportation that reduce carbon monoxide, and the mitigation of night light pollution are also of interest.
6. The division of the Comprehensive Plan into 8 equal sections suggests a delicate balance between the protection of the environment and the needs of man.

## NEXT WEEK -

The January 19, 2019 newsletter will discuss Recreation, Conservation, & Open Space as they are addressed in Middletown's Comprehensive Community Plan

## FOOTNOTE

Weekly essays about Middletown community and municipal affairs will appear on the Middletown Public Library website. Questions and suggested topics are welcome. Editorial essays may appear in the following blog: [MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com](http://MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com).